

Chapter 14.

Cultural Resources

Affected Environment

Data Sources

The cultural resource analysis is based on the Hamilton Army Airfield disposal and reuse EIS (U.S. Army Corps of Engineers 1996a), which summarizes information obtained from the following sources:

- ◆ National Register of Historic Places Evaluation of Eight Buildings on Hamilton Army Airfield, Marin County, California, Final Report (PAR Environmental Services 1993a);
- ◆ Hamilton Army Airfield Historic District Historic Resources Inventory Forms (PAR Environmental Services 1993b);
- ◆ National Register of Historic Places Evaluation, Hamilton Army Airfield Historic District, Marin County, California (Draft) (PAR Environmental Services 1993c);
- ◆ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District, Novato, California (PAR Environmental Services 1994); and
- ◆ National Register of Historic Places Registration Form, Hamilton Army Air Field Discontiguous Historic District, Novato, California (PAR Environmental Services 1998).

In addition, information about the BMKV parcel is based on the Bel Marin Keys V final EIR/EIS (Environmental Science Associates 1993) and miscellaneous studies of the SLC parcel. The area of potential effects (APE) includes the HAAF and SLC parcels.

Prehistory of the Area

The project area is located in the former territory of the Coast Miwok, who have inhabited Marin and Sonoma Counties from approximately 5,000 years ago and who live there today. Early inhabitants relied heavily on the resources associated with San Pablo Bay and associated marshes and estuarine environments. Several archaeological sites associated with past use are found near the project area and generally inland of the project site; most are situated above the historic marshlands. The Coast Miwok village of Puyuku is situated within 1 mile of the project site.

Historic Background

It is presumed that the earliest Coast Miwok contact with Europeans came in the late 1500s with the voyages of Drake and Cermeno. Missionization, beginning in the late 1700s, forced Native Americans to convert to Christianity, resulting in population displacement and cultural disintegration. Epidemics further reduced native populations. After Mexico gained its independence from Spain, a series of land claims were granted to the *Californios* (California citizens of Mexican descent). Rancho San Jose, in which the BMKV parcel is contained, was granted to Ignacio Pacheco. Livestock grazing associated with the rancho was the predominant agricultural pursuit at that time. With railroad development in the 1870s, Novato and Ignacio became viable agricultural communities. Levee construction and land reclamation of the 1890s increased agricultural options. When the California Packing Company (Cal Packing, now Del Monte) took over the property in the late 1920s, agricultural use was pursued in earnest. Cal Packing raised sugar beets, peas, and other crops and bred stallions, which were also used in farm work. Irrigation necessary for this large-scale operation was provided by onsite wells, which have since been abandoned because of saltwater intrusion. Agricultural use of the property still occurs but is limited to dry farming of oat hay.

HAAF was constructed between 1931 and 1935, specifically as a bombardment base. As one of three such bases in the United States at the time, the airfield played a vital role in the development of air defense mechanisms on the west coast in the 1930s and in the training and processing of units during the early 1940s. The use of a Spanish Eclectic architectural style represented a departure from the traditional military approach to base construction, increasing the base's importance. The craftsmanship evident in the original buildings found on base, and the overall layout and landscaping, are also significant. More generic-style temporary buildings that are characteristic of construction methods used during World War II are also found at HAAF.

In 1993, the significance of HAAF was evaluated against the criteria established for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) and found to be eligible as a historic district (PAR Environmental Services 1993c). This research has determined that the most significant phase of historical activity at HAAF occurred during 1931–1946; the boundaries of a historic district were established accordingly to include all areas of the

military reservation active during that period. Within the period of significance for the Hamilton Historic District are two distinct architectural and historical phases: 1931–1935 and 1938–1946. During 1931–1935, the permanent facilities were constructed and the post was established as a vital component of west coast air defense, and during 1938–1946, the air base underwent a period of dramatic expansion to serve in its role as a staging area for World War II air transport and a postwar reentry facility.

Regulatory Setting

When the Army was directed to dispose of the HAAF, it was obligated to comply with Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act (NHPA) of 1966, as amended, and its implementing regulations, 36 CFR Part 800. Compliance with Section 106 requires historic properties (including archaeological, historical, and architectural resources) to be inventoried and evaluated for their eligibility for listing on the NRHP.

The Army's compliance with Section 106 for the Hamilton Army Airfield Historic District has been directed by two memoranda of agreement (MOA). The first agreement was executed in April 1994 between the Army, General Services Administration (GSA), Advisory Council on Historic Preservation (ACHP), and State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO). The MOA covered the effects of conveyance of the outparcels on historic properties. Subsequently, another MOA was executed between the Army, ACHP, and SHPO regarding the effect on historic properties of the disposal and reuse of the BRAC parcels.

Summary of Cultural Resource Investigations

The results of previous studies in the area of potential effects (APE) for the proposed project are described below.

Archaeological Studies

Numerous archaeological investigations have been conducted within the boundaries of the Hamilton installation (Archaeological Consulting and Research Services 1979a, 1979b; Archaeological Resource Service 1991; Baker and Salzman 1980; Chavez 1986; Desgrandchamp and Clark 1978; Flynn 1978; PAR Environmental Services 1989). Portions of the APE for the project have been surveyed. Unsurveyed portions of the APE are fill, with little or no potential to contain cultural resources. No known archaeological sites were found to be present on any of the parcels subjected to disposal and reuse (Archaeological Consulting and Research Services 1979a, 1979b; Chavez 1986).

Architectural Studies

HAAF has been the subject of numerous architectural investigations. In 1993, the research culminated in a complete inventory of HAAF (PAR Environmental Services 1993b) and the preparation of a determination of eligibility (DOE) report (PAR Environmental Services 1993c) and draft NRHP nomination for the Hamilton Army Airfield Historic District (PAR Environmental Services 1993d). The DOE report presents the historical context for the air base, a thorough documentation of the cultural landscape at HAAF, and the evaluation of the district's eligibility for listing on the NRHP as specified in 36 CFR 60.4.

In April 1998, PAR Environmental Services conducted a reevaluation of the DOE and prepared the National Register of Historic Places registration form for the Hamilton Historic District (PAR Environmental Services 1998). The result of this reevaluation was a reduction in the area encompassed by the district. Current district boundaries are presented in Figure 14-1. Currently, the district boundaries are outside the footprint of the wetland restoration project. This reevaluation is currently in draft form and is being reviewed by the Office of Historic Preservation.

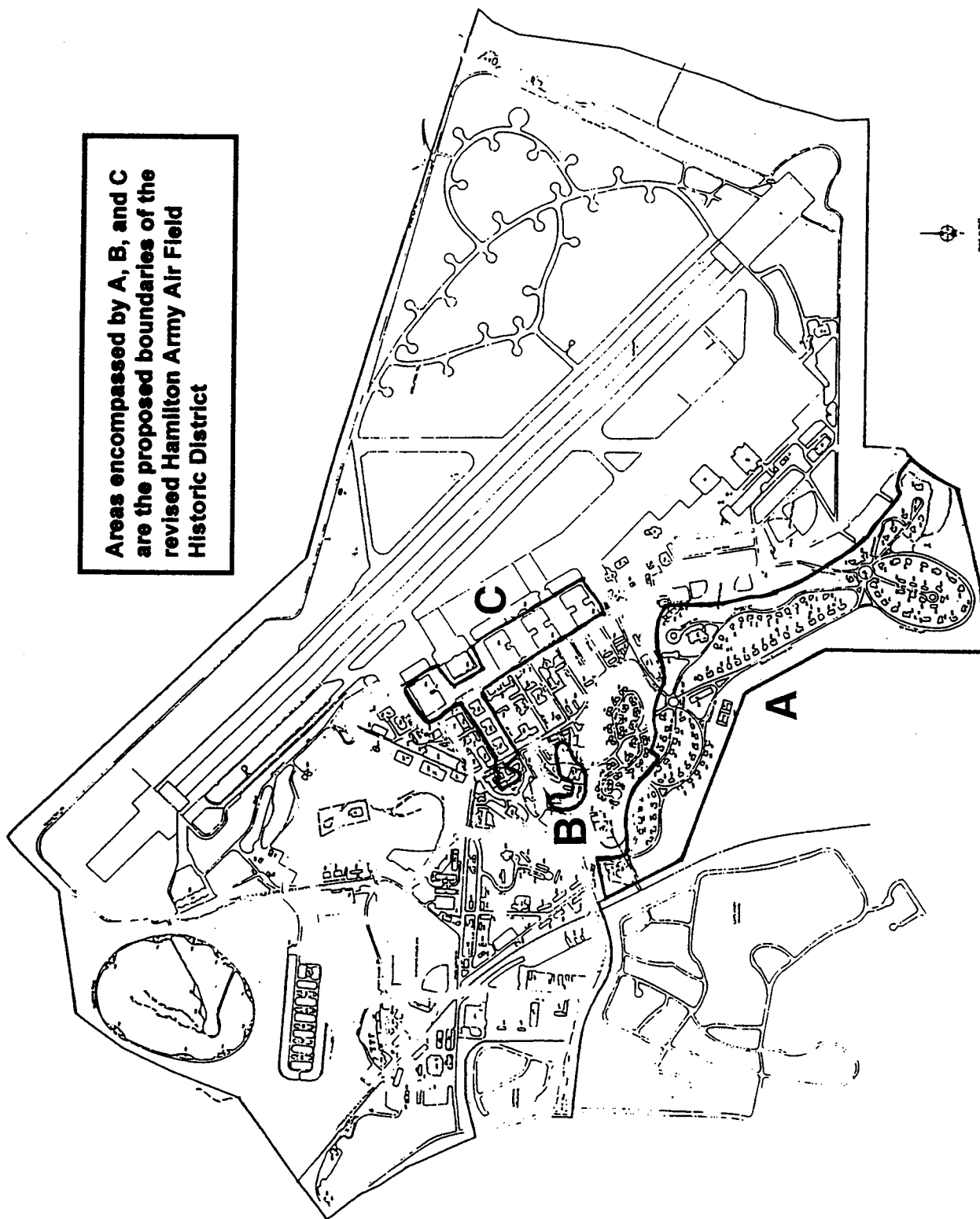
Status of Mitigation Implementation at HAAF

Disposal and reuse of HAAF was determined to have an adverse effect on the integrity and research potential of the historic district as a whole. To mitigate this impact, the Army is implementing mitigation measures stipulated in the MOA for other Army actions, namely the conveyance of the outparcels and BRAC parcels. These mitigation measures include preparing historical documentation, developing two video productions on the history of the former HAAF, completing a nomination to the NRHP, preparing a museum interpretive plan and brochure for the Novato Historical Guild, and preparing written and photographic documentation of the historic district for submittal to the Library of Congress, in accordance with the requirements of the Historic American Building Survey (HABS).

To further mitigate the transfer of historic properties, the Army has developed an interpretive display to illustrate to the public the history and significance of the district. This exhibit includes a transportable modular display, interpretive materials illustrating the historical and architectural significance of Hamilton Historic District, and a portable television and videocassette recorder for viewing the videos. The exhibit was designed to be presented at professional meetings, Army functions, and other public venues, including the Novato Historical Guild.

To supplement historical research conducted to date, the Army is conducting oral history research to document the experiences of personnel formerly stationed at the installation. This information will be used as part of both the Novato Historical Guild's museum and the Army's mobile interpretive display.

Areas encompassed by A, B, and C
are the proposed boundaries of the
revised Hamilton Army Air Field
Historic District



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Figure 14-1
Proposed Boundaries of the Revised
Hamilton Army Air Field Historic District

Summary of Cultural Resources in the APE for the Proposed Project

The HAAF parcel and the BMKV parcel have been surveyed for cultural resources, and no known prehistoric or historic archaeological resources are present on either of these two parcels (Archaeological Consulting and Research Services 1979a, 1979b; Chavez 1986; Environmental Science Associates 1993). The HAAF parcel includes elements of the former Hamilton Army Airfield Historic District, but as it is currently delineated (Figure 14-1), no portions of the proposed revised Hamilton Historic District are in the APE for the Hamilton Wetland Restoration Project (PAR Environmental Services 1998). Although the potential for these parcels to contain prehistoric or historic resources is considered low, resources may exist beneath the surface.

The SLC parcel has not been surveyed for cultural resources. Remnants of the site's previous use as an Air Force antenna field are scattered throughout the site, including an array of seven 50-foot-tall poles topped by antennas, a concrete operations building, a concrete generator building, a paved parking area, and numerous concrete footings. In addition, in the southeastern corner of the area is the former Air Force rifle range. Because the SLC parcel was formerly part of San Pablo Bay, it is highly unlikely that prehistoric resources are present on the site; however, offshore archaeological resources (e.g., fishing camps, wharves, sunken ships and boats) could be present.

Environmental Consequences and Mitigation Measures

Approach and Methods

Impact Mechanisms

Ground-disturbing activities could adversely affect previously unidentified historic and prehistoric cultural resources that could be present at the project site.

Thresholds of Significance

CEQA defines a significant historical resource as "a resource listed or eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources" (Pub. Res. Code, Section 5024.1). For a historical resource to be eligible for listing on the California Register of Historical Resources (CRHR), it must be significant at the local, state, or national level under one or more of the following four criteria:

- (1) it is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of local or regional history, or the cultural heritage of California or the United States;

- (2) it is associated with the lives of persons important to local, California, or national history;
- (3) it embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, region, or method of construction, or represents the work of a master or possesses high artistic values; or
- (4) it has yielded, or has the potential to yield, information important to the prehistory or history of the local area, California, or the nation.

Historical resources automatically listed on the CRHR include those historic properties listed on, or formally determined eligible for listing on, the NRHP.

Because the proposed project also must comply with Section 106 of the NHPA, federal significance criteria are also applied in the following analysis. For federal projects, cultural resource significance is evaluated in terms of eligibility for listing on the NRHP. NRHP criteria for eligibility are defined as follows:

The quality of significance in American history, architecture, archeology, and culture is present in districts, sites, buildings, structures, and objects of state and local importance that possess integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling and association, and that:

- (a) are associated with events that have made a contribution to the broad pattern of our history;
- (b) are associated with the lives of people significant in our past;
- (c) embody the distinct characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction, or that represent the work of a master, or that possess high artistic values, or that represent a significant and distinguishable entity whose components may lack individual distinction; or
- (d) have yielded, or are likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history (36 CFR 60.4).

Impacts and Mitigation Measures of Alternative I: No Action

Under Alternative 1, no cultural resources would be disturbed.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures Common to Alternatives 2 and 3

No known cultural resources are present in the areas that would be affected under Alternative 2 or 3; therefore, restoration is not expected to result in any cultural resource impacts.

Impacts and Mitigation Measures Common to Alternatives 4 and 5

Impact 14.1: Potential Disturbance of Unknown Resources on the SLC Parcel

Potentially historic cultural resources associated with the former HAAF are present on the SLC parcel. These resources have not been inventoried or evaluated to determine whether they are significant. Because the revised proposed Hamilton Army Airfield Historic District has been substantially downsized and is now limited to the few major structures and structure groupings still present, it is likely that these ancillary resources would not be found significant. However, if the resources present on the SLC are found to be significant using NRHP or CRHR criteria, restoration activities could adversely affect them. This impact is considered significant. To mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, the Coastal Conservancy, Corps, or successors in interest shall implement Mitigation Measure 14.1.

Prehistoric or historic archaeological resources are not likely to be located in the SLC parcel; however, if these resources were present, restoration activities could adversely affect unknown cultural resources eligible for listing on the NRHP or the CRHR. This impact is considered significant. To mitigate this impact to a less-than-significant level, the Coastal Conservancy, Corps, or successors in interest shall implement Mitigation Measure 14.2.

Mitigation Measure 14.1: Avoid or Document Significant Historic-Period Cultural Resources. The Coastal Conservancy, Corps, or successors in interest shall retain a qualified cultural resource specialist to conduct a cultural resource investigation, including an inventory of the entire parcel and a significance evaluation to determine whether the historic-period resources present on the SLC parcel are eligible for listing on either the CRHR or the NRHP. If any of these resources or any newly discovered resources are determined to be significant, the Coastal Conservancy, Corps, or successors in interest shall conduct a program of data recovery or documentation in accordance with the guidelines of the Secretary of the Interior.

Mitigation Measure 14.2: Avoid or Document Significant Prehistoric Cultural Resources. The Coastal Conservancy, Corps, or successors in interest shall retain a qualified cultural resource specialist to conduct a cultural resource investigation to assess whether buried prehistoric or historic period resources are likely to be present on the SLC parcel. A program of focused historical research should be conducted to prepare this assessment. If research indicates that there is a potential for the discovery of buried

resources during project implementation, a plan to address unanticipated discoveries should be developed before construction begins. This plan should include requirements for monitoring (as appropriate) and the actions that will follow any unanticipated discovery of cultural materials.

Potential Issues and Resolutions under the Bel Marin Keys V Scenario

Potential Issue: Potential Disturbance of Unknown Resources on the SLC Parcel

Restoration of the BMKV and SLC parcels could adversely affect cultural resources eligible for listing on the NRHP or the CRHR. This potential issue is considered significant. A potential resolution to this issue would be similar to Mitigation Measure 14.2.